The Portrayal of Epidemic and Pandemic in the Select Novels of Ashoke Mukhopadhyay, Timeri Murari and Amitav Ghosh

A Research Proposal
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Title of the Proposal

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Introduction:-

Today, world is facing the hazardous consequences of Pandemic. For the last couple of years the entire world has succumbed to the Social, Economical and Political degradation due to the drastic effect of Pandemic.

In the past, history witnessed the impact of Epidemics such as cholera, Malaria, Plague, Swine Flu , Spanish Flu and so on. All these Epidemics spread with evil wings and devastated the human race. Even Pandemic including COVID-19 has deflated the human lives. The fear of Pandemic has even changed the human perception towards the diseases and also towards the life.

Portrayal of Epidemic and Pandemic can be traced back to 15th and 16th century with publication of *The Decameron (1620)* by Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Plague (1973)* by Albert Camus, *The Scarlet Plague (1912)* by Jack London, *The Mosque of the Red Death (1842)* by Edgar Allan Poe. In their works, they related the impact of Epidemics and Pandemics in the contemporary society. Moreover, their writing were categorised as sciencefiction in which they gave a detailed information about the diseases for the awareness of the common people.

In Indian Literature also we find some works on Epidemic and Pandemic like *A Ballad of Remittent Fever* by Ashoke Mukhopadhyay, *The Final Contagion* by Timeri N. Murrari, *Gun Island* by Amitav Ghosh, *The Calcutta Chromosome* by Amitav Ghosh, *Pahighar* by Kamalkant Tripathi, *Twilight in Delhi* by Ahmad Ali, *A Life of Misspent* by Suryakant Tripathi (Nirala). There works on Epidemic and Pandemic unfolded the horror and delirium of the invisible foe, who left no traces assault. The power and force exerted by the Pandemic lead to the cold war and dispute among the citizens without any mercy had been portrayed in the Literature. The Trauma of the Pandemics had been narrated in the Literature in the backdrop of Pandemic situation.

Ashoke Mukhopadhyay is a playwright, actor and director. *A Ballad of Remittent Fever* is originally published in Bengali as *Abhiram Jwarer Roopkatha.* Which is translated by Arunav Sinha. His other famous works includes *Agnipurush, Atta-Ntar Surya* etc. Next, **Timeri N. Murari** is an Indian Novelist writer. *The Final Contagion* is updated book of *The Oblivion Tapes*. His other famous works are *The Taliban Cricket Club (2012*) and *The Taj (2007)*. And finally, **Amitav Ghosh** is an Indian writer. He won 54 Jnanpith Award in 2018. *Gun Land* is his famous work. His other famous works include *The Circle of Reason, The Shadow Lines, The Glass Palace, The Hungary Tide* and so on.

For the last two and half years, the entire world has been facing the evil consequences of COVID-19 Pandemic. When we study about Epidemic and Pandemic in Literature, a detailed information about the Epidemics as well as Pandemics has becomes significant for the better understanding of the common man.

What is Epidemic and Pandemic?

"An Epidemic is the rapid spread of disease to a large number of hosts in given population within a short period of time." For example- London Flu, Ebola Virus, Nipah Virus etc. (Wikipedia)

While "A Pandemic is an Epidemic of an infectious disease that has spread across a large region, for instance multiple continents of worldwide affecting a substantial number of individauls." For example- Spanish Flu, AIDS and COVID-19 (Wikipedia)

The entire world has been suffer for the last seven years. Today, we are facing COVID-19 Pandemic but before that there is a large history of Epidemic and Pandemic in the past.

1) The Plague :-

   The Plague is one of the most harmful infectious diseases in the history of the world. For centuries numerous Plague Pandemics and Epidemics have occurred, but retrospect it remains unclear whether all outbreaks were cause by the pathogen. We all know about bubonic Plague in mid-14th century. It claimed around 50 million lives in Europe alone.

2) Small Pox :-

   Small Pox was not a one-off disease either- there were recurring local and regional Epidemic outbreaks over the centuries. How many deaths the disease caused altogether is hard to trace. However in the 20th century alone, more than 300 million people worldwide died of Small pox.

3) Cholera :-

   In 19th century, Cholera began to spread across Europe, Humburg, among other places was severely affected in 1892, over 8,000 people died there in a major Outbreak.

4) Spanish Flu :-

   The Spanish Flu raged from 1918 to 1920 and claimed between 27 to 50 million lives worldwide.

5) AIDS :-

   AIDS is estimated to have claimed the lives of almost 35 million people worldwide so-far. The AIDS Pandemic is far from over in 2020 alone 1.5 million people were newly infected.

6) COVID-19 :-

   And today, we are currently amid another global Pandemic. Over 4.5 million people have lost their lives as a result of COVID-19.

(sterillium.info)

Review of Literature:-

Writings on Pandemic can be witnessed in the Literature including books, Journals, Articles are published on this topic like *Homer's* Iliad deals with Trojan War and there is a reference of Plague visited to Greek camp to punish Greeks. Next Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Decameron* is a tale of renewal and recreation in defiance of a decimating Pandemic. Boccaccio attributes the cause of this terrible Plague to either malignant celestial influences or divine punishment for the iniquity of Florentine society. Albert Camus's *The Plague* is about a Plague Epidemic in the large Algerian city. It published in 1947. Daniel Defoel's *A Journal of the Plague Year* deals with grief, sadness, death, survival, redemption, sin hope and faith. It first published in March 1722. *The Scarlet Plague* by Jack London is a tale of Plague and it originally published in London Magazine in 1912.

The Indian Literature also witness works on Epidemic and Pandemic like Suryakant Tripathi Nirala's *A Life of Misspent* deals with death, Pandemic and grief. It translated by Satti Khanna. Tagore's *Chaturanga* is a story of love, disillusionment. This novel published in 1916. *Twilight in Delhi* by Ahmad Ali tells us about Twilight serves as an anesthetic expression of the miserable life of people living in Delhi during the Pandemic. Munshi Premchand's *Eidgah, Doodh ka Dam, Rebati* and many other we get reference about Cholera. Shivshankar Pillai's *Thottiyude Makan* and *Kakkanadan's Vasoori* also we get the story of human emotions and the moments of crisis and so on. We also find some Journal's related to selected topic like *Epidemics and Sickness in French Literature and Culture*, Durham French Colloquies No.5 by Cristopher Lloyd. It explores that how Epidemic and Sickness related to each other. Similarly, *Panic and Pandemic: narrative review of Literature on the links and risks of panic disorder as a consequence of the SARS-COV-2 Pandemic* by Javelot H, Weiner L is about *SARS-COV-2* Pandemic and it deals with panic attacks, panic disorder and the respiratory component. The Select Novels of Ashoke Mukhopadhyay, Timeri Murari and Amitav Ghosh are based on Epidemic Fear, Pandemic Trauma, Resilience, Human Perception and Struggle for Survival.

Aims and Objectives of the study:-

1) To review and analyse Indian writings related to Epidemic and Pandemic.
2) To analyse Pandemic Trauma, Fear and Resilience as reflected in Pandemic Literature.
3) To study how Epidemic and Pandemic affect the human life.
4) To explore psychological and emotional condition of human mind during the Pandemic.
5) To study struggle of human in Epidemic and Pandemic for the survival.
6) To prospect the impact of Pandemic on economical, social, political and cultural aspects on the contemporary society in India as well as in the world.

Hypothesis:-

1) This proposed research teach us how to face Epidemic and Pandemic.
2) This research work is an attempt to visualise and find out the Truama, Fear and other psychological issues confronted by the characters in the select novels of Ashoke Mukhopadhyay, Timeri Murari and Amitav Ghosh.
3) To presuppose the ethical and cultural repudation and acceptance of the characters in Pandemic situation.

Significance of the study:-

The proposed research is very useful for society, researchers and other people as it is based on current issue like COVID-19 Pandemic. The present research work helps to add some existing knowledge in the field of Epidemic and Pandemic. It is also useful for the researcher as it covers all the aspects of social, political, economic, cultural and psychological issues related to Epidemic and Pandemic.

Research Problem:-

The research analyses the research problem that how Ashoke Mukhopadhyay, Timeri Murari and Amitav Ghosh portray Epidemic and Pandemic in their novels with different perspective.

Research Methodology:-

This research work is an example of qualitative research which is based on primary, secondary and also on web sources. This research work is Analytical, Descriptive, Interpretative and critical in nature with adopting the MLA style.

Scope and Limitations:-

Scope:-

The research proposal is mostly related to Epidemic and Pandemic in the select books. Today, we are facing COVID-19 Pandemic. This research work focuses on how people struggle for survival in Epidemic and Pandemic and how they face psychological Trauma. There is a lot of scope for doing research in this field because this is based on current issues.

Limitations:-

The limitation of the study is that this proposal focuses on only three Indian writers and their works. And another limitation is this that there are very few works are written on this Pandemic topic in India.

Tentative chapter scheme:-

Chapter -1: Introduction

This chapter deals with introductory part of research work. It includes history of Epidemic and Pandemic in the world as well as in India, history of epidemic and Pandemic Literature, writers and their works will be dealt in detail.

Chapter -2: Epidemic Fear and Human Perception in Ashoke Mukhopadhyay's *A Ballad of Remittent Fever*.

The second chapter is about how Epidemic fear effects on characters in the Novel and it also deals with Human perception on Epidemics and consequences.

Chapter-3: Pandemic and Struggle for survival in Timeri Murari's *The Final Contagion*.

The third chapter is about the Pandemic, Plague and it also shows how the characters struggle for their survival at the time of Pandemic.

Chapter-4: Pandemic Trauma and Resilience in Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island*

In this chapter we study about how psychological Trauma effects on characters life in Pandemic and also with the aspect of Resilience of the characters.

Chapter-5: Conclusion.

The final chapter is a summary of all the chapters and the findings. It also Includes the concluding part of the research.

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